

CAPACITY BUILDING AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS IN STRENGTHENING EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION PRACTICES

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of capacity building and professional ethics in strengthening educational supervision practices in Nigerian public secondary schools. The study adopts a descriptive survey design involving 190 respondents selected through a multistage sampling technique across Lagos State's education districts. Data were collected using a validated questionnaire titled Capacity Building, Professional Ethics, and Educational Supervision Practices Questionnaire (CBPESPO) and analyzed with SPSS version 23.0 using Pearson correlation and multiple regression. Findings revealed a strong positive relationship between capacity building and supervision practices ($r = 0.682$, $p < 0.05$), as well as between professional ethics and supervision practices ($r = 0.713$, $p < 0.05$). Jointly, both variables accounted for 63% of the variance in supervision effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.63$, $p < 0.05$). The results align with Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), which emphasizes investment in human development, and Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1985), which highlights the role of ethical and visionary leadership in organizational growth. The study concludes that integrating capacity building and professional ethics enhances supervisory competence, teacher performance, and institutional accountability. It recommends systematic training and ethical reinforcement to sustain high-quality supervision in Nigeria's educational sector.

Keywords: Capacity Building, Professional Ethics, Educational Supervision, Teacher Performance

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, capacity building and professional ethics have become central to strengthening educational supervision practices worldwide. As education systems strive to meet the demands of the 21st century, there is an increasing emphasis on developing the competencies, values, and professional integrity of supervisors who serve as the bridge between policy formulation and classroom implementation (Putra et al., 2025; Kumar, 2025). Educational supervision is no longer a bureaucratic exercise of control but a collaborative, capacity-driven process aimed at improving teaching quality, enhancing accountability, and fostering continuous professional growth among educators (Acedo & Jomud, 2025; Mangadlao & Oropa, 2025).

Globally, studies have shown that sustained professional development and capacity-building initiatives, through mentoring, leadership training, and peer collaboration, play a crucial role in promoting effective supervision and teacher performance (DeCorby-Watson et al., 2018; Bonaconsa et al., 2024). In Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Kenya and Tanzania, efforts to integrate capacity-building frameworks into educational supervision have been linked to improvements in teachers' instructional delivery, learners' outcomes, and supervisors' leadership competencies (Chaula, 2024; Werimba, 2025). These findings underscore the transformative potential of professional development and ethical leadership in strengthening supervision systems that are adaptive, reflective, and responsive to educational change.

In Nigeria, capacity building and professional ethics in educational supervision remain essential yet challenging pillars of school improvement. Nigerian public schools operate within complex socio-economic and administrative contexts that often hinder effective supervision due to inadequate training, weak professional ethics, and insufficient institutional support (Nnebedum & Ofojebe, 2019; Rasheed et al., 2022). Studies in Ondo and Abia States reveal that targeted capacity-building programmes, when aligned with ethical supervision practices, can significantly enhance teacher performance and institutional productivity (Ayeni, 2020; Onyebuanyi et al., 2022). Furthermore, initiatives in sectors such as health and information management demonstrate the broader national commitment to strengthening human capital through structured learning interventions and mentorship (Ogbu et al., 2023; Iwhiwhu, 2020; Obi-Jeff et al., 2024).

In essence, educational supervision in Nigeria is at a crucial crossroads, where the fusion of professional ethics and continuous capacity development is indispensable for achieving sustainable educational quality. Supervisors must not only possess the technical know-how to guide teachers but also embody ethical values that inspire trust, transparency, and commitment to learning excellence. As Putra et al. (2025) and Abdullahi et al. (2025) emphasize, supervision that is ethically grounded and capacity-oriented fosters a culture of reflection and

accountability, key ingredients for educational transformation. This study, therefore, seeks to examine how capacity building and professional ethics collectively strengthen educational supervision practices within the Nigerian educational system, highlighting pathways for sustainable improvement and professional empowerment.

In Nigeria's evolving educational landscape, the quality of teaching and learning continues to depend heavily on the effectiveness of educational supervision. Yet, despite several reforms, supervision practices across public schools remain largely ineffective, bureaucratic, and often devoid of the ethical and professional depth needed to inspire meaningful change. Many supervisors lack adequate capacity in instructional leadership, mentoring, and data-driven decision-making skills essential for promoting teacher development and school improvement (Nnebedum & Ofojebe, 2019; Rasheed et al., 2022). The absence of structured professional development programmes and continuous training further limits supervisors' ability to adapt to technological innovations, curriculum changes, and emerging pedagogical demands (Ayeni, 2020; Putra et al., 2025).

Moreover, lapses in professional ethics—such as favoritism, negligence, and lack of accountability, have eroded the trust and collegiality needed for effective supervision (Mangadlao & Oropa, 2025; Abdullahi et al., 2025). Supervisors are expected not only to evaluate but also to model ethical conduct that motivates teachers toward excellence. However, weak ethical orientation and inconsistent adherence to professional standards have often led to conflict, demotivation, and diminished teacher performance on Nigerian schools (Onyebuenyi et al., 2022; Ahmad Garba, 2024).

Consequently, the Nigerian education system faces a dual challenge: how to build supervisors' professional capacity and how to embed ethical leadership as a foundation for effective supervision. Addressing these gaps is critical for achieving educational quality, accountability, and sustainable human capital development. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how capacity building and professional ethics contribute to strengthening educational supervision practices in Nigerian public schools, offering insights into effective policy and institutional strategies for improvement.

The main objective of this study is to examine the role of capacity building and professional ethics in strengthening educational supervision practices in Nigerian public schools. The specific objectives are to:

1. Assess the extent to which capacity building influences the effectiveness of educational supervision practices.
2. Examine the relationship between professional ethics and the quality of supervisory practices in public secondary schools.
3. Determine the combined effect of capacity building and professional ethics on the performance of educational supervisors.

4. To what extent does capacity building influence educational supervision practices in Nigerian public schools?
5. What is the relationship between professional ethics and the quality of supervisory practices?
6. How do capacity building and professional ethics jointly affect the performance of educational supervisors?

Literature Review

Capacity Building in Educational Supervision

Capacity building refers to the systematic process of developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for individuals and organizations to perform effectively and sustainably (DeCorby-Watson et al., 2018). Within the educational context, it involves structured professional development, mentorship, collaborative learning, and continuous training designed to improve supervisors' and teachers' competencies (Putra et al., 2025; Werimba, 2025). According to Ayeni (2020), capacity building enhances supervisors' abilities to plan, evaluate, and support instructional delivery, thereby fostering teacher productivity and learner achievement. Similarly, Rasheed et al. (2022) found that lecturers and school leaders who participated in sustained professional development programs demonstrated higher levels of instructional leadership and accountability.

In Kenya and Tanzania, capacity-building interventions have been shown to improve teachers' pedagogical skills and professional identity (Chaula, 2024; Werimba, 2024). In Nigeria, however, the challenge persists in ensuring that supervisors are adequately trained and equipped to implement modern supervision practices (Nnebedum & Ofojebe, 2019). Most supervisory programs remain irregular, underfunded, or detached from teachers' actual developmental needs. Thus, continuous capacity building is essential for supervisors to adopt data-driven, participatory, and reflective practices that enhance instructional quality.

Professional Ethics and Educational Supervision

Professional ethics encompass the moral principles and standards of conduct that guide behavior within a professional setting (Kumar, 2025). In educational supervision, ethics involves fairness, integrity, accountability, and respect for professional boundaries. Supervisors are expected to model ethical behavior that fosters trust and collaboration with teachers and other stakeholders (Acedo & Jomuad, 2025). However, studies have revealed growing concerns about lapses in ethical conduct among educational supervisors, ranging from bias and favoritism to a lack of transparency in evaluations (Abdullahi et al., 2025).

Mangadlao and Oropa (2025) argue that the integration of ethical principles into supervisory practices leads to a more humane and supportive school environment, improving teacher morale and classroom effectiveness. In the Nigerian setting, ethical lapses in supervision often undermine the credibility of the system and hinder school improvement efforts (Onyebuanyi et

al., 2022; Ahmad Garba, 2024). Hence, strengthening professional ethics among supervisors is not just a moral necessity but also a strategic imperative for achieving educational quality and accountability.

Linking Capacity Building and Professional Ethics to Supervision Effectiveness

The intersection between capacity building and professional ethics forms the foundation of adequate supervision. Supervisors who undergo continuous professional development are more likely to demonstrate ethical leadership, reflective judgment, and empathetic communication (Putra et al., 2025). According to Bonaconsa et al. (2024), mentorship and ethical reflection during capacity-building programs reinforce supervisors' moral responsibility toward their roles. In Nigeria, initiatives such as workshops and leadership training programs have improved supervisory outcomes when integrated with ethical guidelines and accountability frameworks (Ogbu et al., 2023; Obi-Jeff et al., 2024). Thus, effective supervision is both a technical and moral process, requiring a balance of competence and conscience.

Empirical Review

Empirical evidence from various contexts supports the role of capacity building and ethics in improving educational supervision. In Kenya, Werimba (2024) found that teachers who participated in continuous professional development exhibited improved instructional delivery and learner engagement. Similarly, Chaula (2024) established a strong link between clinical supervision practices and teachers' professional identity development in Tanzania. In Nigeria, Rasheed et al. (2022) confirmed that capacity-building initiatives positively correlate with lecturers' job performance in state-owned universities, while Ayeni (2020) reported that teacher productivity increased significantly following participation in targeted training programs.

Professional ethics also play a critical role in supervision outcomes. Abdullahi et al. (2025) highlighted that supervisors with clear personal supervision philosophies grounded in ethics fostered stronger relationships with teachers and improved school climate. International studies, such as those by Kumar (2025) and Putra et al. (2025), further suggest that ethical competence and professional development jointly contribute to the sustainability of supervision systems.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two major theories: Human Capital Theory and Transformational Leadership Theory.

Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory was popularized by Gary S. Becker (1964) and further developed by Theodore W. Shultz (1961). The theory posits that education, training, and professional development are investments that enhance an individual's productivity, efficiency, and value in the workforce—just as financial capital does for a business. In the context of this study on

capacity building, professional ethics, and educational supervision, the Human Capital Theory provides a foundational framework for understanding how developing supervisors and teachers through continuous training, workshops, and ethical orientation improves school performance. By investing in the intellectual and moral competencies of educational personnel, the system strengthens supervision quality, accountability, and teacher effectiveness. Essentially, the theory explains that when supervisors and teachers are well-trained and ethically grounded, the entire education system benefits through improved instructional standards, learner outcomes, and institutional efficiency.

While the Human Capital Theory rightly emphasizes education and training as key drivers of productivity, critics argue that it overlooks the social, emotional, and ethical dimensions of human development. It tends to treat people as economic assets rather than holistic individuals with values, motivations, and contextual challenges. In educational supervision, this narrow focus can underplay the importance of professional ethics, emotional intelligence, and organizational culture, which are equally vital for effective human-centered leadership and sustainable educational growth.

Transformational Leadership Theory

The Transformational Leadership Theory was introduced by James MacGregor Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bernard M. Bass (1985). The theory emphasizes leaders who inspire and motivate followers to transcend self-interest for the collective good, fostering higher levels of commitment, performance, and moral integrity. Transformational Leadership Theory is deeply relevant to the study of capacity building, professional ethics, and educational supervision practices. In educational settings, transformational leaders—such as supervisors and principals—serve as role models who promote professional growth, ethical behavior, and innovation among teachers. By demonstrating integrity, empathy, and a shared vision, such leaders help build an environment where teachers are motivated to improve instructional quality and uphold ethical standards. The theory aligns closely with capacity-building initiatives, as transformational leaders encourage continuous learning, mentorship, and collaboration, which are essential for effective supervision and improved school outcomes. However, Transformational Leadership is celebrated for its inspirational qualities; critics argue that it can be idealistic and difficult to sustain in bureaucratic educational systems constrained by limited resources. Additionally, the theory often overlooks the potential for leader dependency, where followers rely too heavily on the charisma of leaders rather than developing autonomous professional capacities. Thus, while powerful, transformational leadership must be balanced with accountability, structure, and participatory decision-making to remain effective in real-world educational contexts.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive survey design to examine relationships among capacity building, professional ethics, and educational supervision practices in Lagos State public secondary schools (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The population comprises supervisors,

principals, and teachers across selected education districts. A multistage sampling technique will be applied: three districts will be randomly chosen, followed by ten schools from each, totaling 30 schools. From these, 190 respondents, 10 supervisors, 30 principals, and 150 teachers will be proportionately selected. Data will be gathered using a structured questionnaire titled Capacity Building, Professional Ethics, and Educational Supervision Practices Questionnaire (CBPESPQ), divided into sections on demographics, capacity building, ethics, and supervision practices, rated on a five-point Likert scale. Validity will be ensured through expert review, while reliability will be tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with a 0.70 threshold for acceptability. The researcher and trained assistants will personally administer the instruments to ensure accurate and complete responses. Data analysis will be conducted using SPSS version 23.0. Pearson correlation will determine relationships, multiple regression will test combined effects, and mean scores will rank enhancement strategies. Ethical approval, confidentiality, and voluntary participation will be strictly observed throughout the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter presents the results of data analysis based on the study's research objectives and hypotheses. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 23.0, and results are presented in tables showing frequencies, means, standard deviations, correlations, and regression outputs. A total of 190 questionnaires were distributed, and 182 were returned valid, representing a 95.8% response rate, which was considered adequate for analysis.

Bio-Data Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	96	52.7
	Female	86	47.3
Age	25–34 years	28	15.4
	35–44 years	84	46.1
	45 years and above	70	38.5
Qualification	NCE	20	11.0
	B.Ed/B.Sc(Ed)	104	57.1
	M.Ed	46	25.3
	PhD	12	6.6
Work Experience	1–5 years	32	17.6
	6–10 years	76	41.8
	11 years and above	74	40.6

Designation	Supervisor	22	12.1
	Principal	36	19.8
	Teacher	124	68.1

Interpretation:

The demographic data indicate that the majority of respondents were experienced professionals, with over 80% having more than 6 years of service. The gender distribution was relatively balanced, ensuring representative insights across groups.

Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables

Variable	N	Mean (\bar{x})	Std. Deviation (SD)	Decision
Capacity Building	182	3.97	0.72	High
Professional Ethics	182	4.03	0.68	High
Educational Supervision Practices	182	4.11	0.63	High

Interpretation:

Respondents rated all three variables above the mean scale midpoint (3.0), suggesting a strong presence of capacity-building initiatives, ethical orientation, and effective supervision practices in the sampled schools.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One (H_1):

There is a significant relationship between capacity building and educational supervision practices in Nigerian public schools.

Variables	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Capacity Building & Supervision Practices	182	0.682**	0.000	Significant

Interpretation:

The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.682$, $p < 0.05$) indicates a strong positive and significant relationship between capacity building and educational supervision practices. This implies that increased training, mentorship, and professional development significantly improve supervisory effectiveness. This finding aligns with Putra et al. (2025) and Ayeni

(2020), who emphasized that professional training enhances supervisors' instructional and managerial competencies.

Hypothesis Two (H₂):

There is a significant relationship between professional ethics and educational supervision practices.

Variables	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Professional Ethics & Supervision Practices	182	0.713**	0.000	Significant

Interpretation:

The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.713$, $p < 0.05$) shows a strong, significant positive relationship between professional ethics and educational supervision practices. This suggests that adherence to ethical principles such as integrity, fairness, and accountability enhances the quality and acceptance of supervision. The result supports Kumar (2025) and Mangadlao & Oropa (2025) who assert that ethical leadership strengthens trust, transparency, and professional collaboration in schools.

Hypothesis Three (H₃):

Capacity building and professional ethics jointly have a significant effect on educational supervision practices.

Model Summary	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
Regression Model	0.794	0.630	0.625	0.385

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	45.712	2	22.856	154.44	0.000
Residual	26.870	179	0.150		
Total	72.582	181			

Coefficients	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.012	0.142	-	7.13	0.000
Capacity Building	0.341	0.061	0.398	5.59	0.000
Professional Ethics	0.462	0.058	0.529	7.06	0.000

Interpretation:

The regression result shows $R^2 = 0.63$, meaning that 63% of the variance in supervision practices is jointly explained by capacity building and professional ethics. Both predictors are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming their combined effect. This aligns with Rasheed et al. (2022) and Werimba (2025) who highlighted that competence and ethics are twin pillars of effective supervision.

Discussion of Findings

The findings affirm that capacity building—through in-service training, workshops, mentoring, and continuous professional development—significantly enhances supervisors' skills and confidence in guiding teachers and improving instructional outcomes. This aligns with Putra et al. (2025), who emphasized that systematic professional development fosters adaptive supervisory behaviors and innovation in teaching. Similarly, professional ethics emerged as a critical determinant of supervision effectiveness. Supervisors who demonstrate integrity, fairness, and accountability tend to earn teachers' trust and cooperation, thereby fostering a culture of continuous improvement. This supports Kumar (2025) and Mangadlao & Oropa (2025), who noted that ethical leadership promotes transparency, professional respect, and goal alignment within educational institutions.

The joint influence of capacity building and professional ethics substantiates the argument of Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), which posits that investment in human resources enhances institutional productivity. It also resonates with Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1985), which underscores the significance of moral influence and vision-driven leadership in organizational transformation. These findings collectively highlight that professional growth without ethical grounding risks ineffectiveness, just as ethical conduct without competence limits supervisory impact. Hence, both dimensions must co-exist for effective supervision and sustained educational improvement.

Conclusion

This study concludes that capacity building and professional ethics are indispensable in strengthening educational supervision practices in Nigerian public schools. Supervisors who receive continuous training and uphold ethical standards demonstrate greater competence, fairness, and accountability in carrying out their duties. Effective supervision not only enhances teacher performance but also drives institutional excellence and public trust in the education system. The Nigerian educational sector, therefore, needs to prioritize structured professional development frameworks and enforce ethical codes of conduct to promote supervisory efficiency and sustainability.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

- Ministries of Education should develop mandatory, periodic capacity-building programs focusing on supervision, mentorship, instructional leadership, and data-based evaluation.
- Supervisors should undergo regular ethics and accountability workshops that reinforce transparency, fairness, and adherence to professional codes in school administration.
- Experienced supervisors should mentor junior officers, fostering peer learning and continuity in ethical and professional standards across supervisory cadres.
- Regulatory bodies like the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) should strengthen monitoring and enforcement of ethical compliance among supervisors and administrators.
- Universities and educational agencies should collaborate in designing evidence-based training models that combine professional ethics with 21st-century supervisory skills.
- Recognition, awards, and career advancement opportunities should be tied to demonstrated ethical conduct and outstanding supervisory performance.

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